



Attorney Docket No.: 2001P14018WOUS

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: Karl-Friedrich Laible
Application Number: 10/725,090
Filing Date: 12/01/2003
Group Art Unit: 3637
Examiner: Hanh Van Tran
Title: Body for a Refrigerator

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P.O. Box 1450
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APPEAL BRIEF

Dear Sir:

Pursuant to 37 CFR 1.192, Appellant hereby files an Appeal Brief in the above-identified application. The time for filing this Appeal Brief has been extended four months by separate petition and fee filed concurrently herewith, to December 1, 2005. This Appeal Brief is also accompanied by the requisite fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(f).

(1) REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest are the inventor and BSH Bosch und Siemens Hausgeraete GmbH, the Assignee in the application.

(2) RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no appeals or interferences that will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

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(3) STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1 - 14 are pending in the application.

Claims 1 - 14 have been finally rejected.

(4) STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

The first Amendment was filed responsive to an Office Action dated May 10, 2004. That Amendment has been entered. A Rule 116 Amendment B was responsive to the Final Rejection dated December 1, 2004. That Amendment amended claims 8 – 10 and added new claims 15 – 19. That Amendment was refused entry in an Advisory Action mailed May 26, 2005. The claims on Appeal before the Board are those presented in the Amendment filed in response to the Office Action dated May 10, 2004, which was filed on September 10, 2004.

(5) SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

As stated in independent claim 1, the present invention provides a housing for a refrigerator. The housing recited in claim 1 comprises a body defining an interior, having at least one side part formed from a panel of flat material, sidewalls 7 and a front side with an opening open to the interior. Vertical border strips 6 and horizontal end bars 8, 9 surround the opening, with at least one of the border strips 6 together with at least one of the sidewalls being a constituent part of at least one of the side parts (reference is had to the specification of the present application at page 9, lines 13-18). The side part has a joining element 15 for joining the side part together with at least one of the end bars 9, with at least one end bar 9 being introduced into the joining element 15 and subjecting the border strip 6 to a force having an effect of widening an angle at which the border strip 6 is connected to the sidewall 7 (reference is had to the specification of the present application at page 10, page 9, lines 22-24, page 10, lines 10-19, and page 11, lines 14-24).

As further provided in claim 2, the one end bar has a front side and a rear

side, with the joining element forming a clamp clamping in the end bar between at least two points of contact on a respective one of the front and rear sides. The two points of contact are each are spaced apart by different distances from a sidewall of the body (reference is had to the specification of the present application at page 11, lines 4-10). In claim 3, the end bar has a joint-on buffer body forming at least one of the points of contact (reference is had to the specification of the present application at page 13, lines 9-26). In claim 14, the point of contact on the rear side of the end bar is located closer to an adjacent one of the sidewalls, than the point of contact on the front side (reference is had to the drawing of the present application at Figures 4, 7 and 8).

In claim 5, the clamp has two opposite legs defining a U-profile and a groove. The distance between the two opposite legs is greater than the thickness of the section of the end bar, and the section of the end bar engages the clamp and extends obliquely through the groove of the U-profile between the two points of contact (reference is had to the specification of the present application at page 11, lines 14-20 and Figure 4). In claim 6, at least one of the border strips has an edge directed away from the sidewall and a joining element is connected integrally to the edge directed away from the sidewall. Claim 7 provides that the joining element is connected elastically to the border strip and claim 8 provides that the joining element is connected rigidly to the border strip. Yet still further, claim 9 provides that the joining element is connected rigidly to a sidewall while claim 10 provides that the joining element is connected rigidly to one of the group consisting of the border strip and the sidewall of the border strip. For these various recited claim connections, reference is had to the specification of the present application at page 5, lines 21-25 and page 6, lines 1-17, as well as page 12, lines 4-15.

Claim 11 provides that the joining element is retained by the end bar in a position in which the joining element has been rotated elastically in relation to a position that the joining element assumes when not joined together with the end

bar (reference is had to the specification of the present application at page 12, lines 16-26 and page 13, lines 1-7).

Claims 12 and 13 respectively provide that the border strip is covered with a colored sheet material, and that the sidewall is free of a color coating at least in a rear region thereof (reference is had to the specification of the present application at page 10, lines 21-25, page 11, lines 1-2, Figure 5 and page 6, lines 19-24).

Finally, claim 14 provides a connection configuration in a refrigerator body defining an interior and having a front side with an opening to the interior, vertical border strips and horizontal end bars surrounding the opening, at least one of the border strips, together with the sidewall being a constituent part of a side part formed from a panel of flat material. A joining element at the side part serves for joining the side part together with the end bar. The end bar is introduced into the joining element and subjects the border strip to a force having the effect of widening an angle at which the border strip is connected to the sidewall (reference is had to the specification of the present application at page 9, lines 13-18).

(6) STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

A first issue is whether claims 1, 2, 4-7, 11 and 14 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,170,391 to Bottger (Bottger).

A second issue is whether claims 3, 8-10 and 12-13 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Bottger in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,984,223 to Whistler, Jr. (Whistler).

(7) GROUPING OF THE CLAIMS

The claims are grouped as follows:

Group I involves claims 1, 2 and 4-11. The claims of this group do not

stand or fall together.

Group II involves claims 12 and 13. The claims in this group do not stand or fall together.

In addition to the claims as grouped, separately and not comprising a part of any group are claims 3 and 14.

(8) THE REFERENCES

U.S. Patent No. 4,170,391 to Bottger

U.S. Patent No. 4,170,391 to Bottger (Bottger) discloses a support arrangement in a refrigerator having a hinged door to attach a hinge pin assembly to the cabinet outer case and to secure the outer case to a mullion (column 1, lines 31-35). More specifically, one end of both a freezer door and a fresh food door is hingedly supported by a refrigerator cabinet outer case which envelops both the freezer and the fresh food compartments (column 2, lines 30-39). To secure a mullion separating the freezer compartment from the refrigerator compartment with respect to their respective closing doors, the outer case of the refrigerator is made from sheet metal and is formed to provide a U-shaped portion at the pin assembly, which includes an outer leg and an inner leg spaced from the outer leg. The U-shaped portion is formed by reverse bending the sheet metal to provide a double thickness co-extensive with the outer leg, a central portion and a single thickness for the inner leg (column 2, lines 46-54). There is thus formed a channel into which will be received a cross piece support member (column 2, lines 54-56).

The outer leg is provided with two openings which are disposed in vertical alignment one with the other and are dimensioned to receive fastener elements. The inner leg, which is of single sheet metal thickness, has a slot opening located between the outer leg openings, preferably in the middle (column 2, lines 59-62).

A cross piece support member may be formed from a single sheet of

metal and is generally T-shaped. It has respectively a first end and a second end with a central portion connecting the two ends. The first end has two threaded openings for receiving in threaded engagement fastener elements. The first end has a detent tang formed of the sheet material of the cross piece support member, and is located between threaded openings of the first end. The detent tang departs from the surface in which the threaded openings are located and is dimensioned slightly smaller than the slot in the inner leg of the U-shaped portion of the outer case. This is to allow the detent tang to be received in the opening when the cross piece member is being secured to the outer case (column 3, lines 4-10).

The cross piece support member has its first end inserted into the U-shaped portion of the outer case such that the detent tang is received in the slot opening and the openings of the outer leg are in alignment with threaded openings of the cross piece. The dimensions of the cross piece support member is slightly smaller relative to the space between the first and second legs of the U-shaped portion such that the cross piece support member is frictionally held in place with the detent tang inserted in the slot opening. That is, the inner leg and the outer leg of the U-shaped case portions are spaced from each other a distance slightly less than the distance between the inner most portion of the detent tang (column 3, lines 26-34).

Thus, in operation, when the support member is inserted into the U-shaped portion, the detent tang of necessity flexes until it reaches the slot opening of the U-shaped portion to be received therein. As a result, there is clearly no subjecting of a border strip to a force having an effect of widening an angle at which the border strip is connected to the sidewall.

Moreover, it is clear from a reading of the disclosure of Bottger that the construction concerning the U-shaped portion is clearly only at the locations where the support members connect to the cabinet outer case inasmuch as no other details are given with respect to the construction of the outer case.

U.S. Patent No. 3,984,223 to Whistler, Jr.

U.S. Patent No. 3,984,223 to Whistler, Jr. (Whistler) discloses a refrigerator construction which permits its cabinet shelf outer condenser loop of hot gas refrigerant tubing to include an integral condenser reverse mullion loop to be located in the plane of the front access opening of the outer shelf prior to the insertion of a one-piece liner (column 1, lines 42-48). A side-by-side refrigerator cabinet includes a continuous outer sheet metal shell forming outer sidewalls and an outer top wall (column 2, lines 50-54). The cabinet shelf sidewalls and the top wall are reinforced at the front with inwardly turned flanges extending inwardly substantially at right angles to the side and top walls around the door opening (column 2, lines 65-68 and column 3, line 1). Preferably this flange is rounded at the corners and formed of a double thickness of metal by being folded back sharply (column 3, lines 1-4).

The interior of the cabinet is provided with a one-piece box-shaped inner liner having outturned flanges which snap into place between the legs of a U-shaped tubular flange arrangement having its open side turned inwardly with an inner flange substantially parallel to an outer flange (column 3, lines 15-20). Lodged within the U-shaped double flange is an outer first loop of a refrigerant tubing with the tubing having an outer diameter substantially equal to the distance between the flanges making the U-shaped arrangement (column 3, lines 21-26). Inserted into the U-shaped tubular flange arrangement is a resilient foam plastic strip preferably formed from polyethylene, which is initially of uniform thickness and extends slightly more than the distance between the edge of the flange and the vertically extending portion of the tubing loop (column 3, lines 28-32).

Nothing further is said about the properties or nature of the resilient foam plastic strip and it only appears from the drawings to partially extend within the U-shaped space, spaced from one of the walls thereof, and clearly not exerting any

kind of force or pressure to deform those walls.

(9) ARGUMENT

The Examiner has indicated that claims 1, 2, 4-7, 11 and 14 are unpatentable under 35 §U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Bottger. However, as will be explained in greater detail hereinafter, it is respectfully submitted that the Bottger reference does not teach, disclose or even render obvious the device as recited in independent claims 1 and 14, and claims 2, 4-7 and 11, which are dependent either directly or indirectly from claim 1.

The Examiner has stated:

“Bottger discloses a housing for a refrigerator comprising all the elements recited in the above-listed claims, including, such as shown in Fig. 1, a body defining an interior and having at least one side part formed from a panel of flat material, such as shown in Figs. 2 & 4, side walls, a front side with an opening open to the interior, vertical border strips, horizontal bars (16,28), said side part having a joining element, the end bar being introduced into the joining element and subjecting the border strip to a force having an effect of widening an angle at which the border strip is connected to the side wall, (i.e., column 3, lines 31-36, the inner leg 34 and the outer leg 32 of the U-shaped case portion are spaced from each other a distance slightly less than the distance between the inner most portion of the detent tang 58 and the outer surface of the first end 44 of the cross piece support member 28), the end bar having at least two points of contact, such as shown in Fig. 3. In regard to claim 11, Bottger meets the limitations recited therein since col. 3, lines 31-36, the inner leg 34 and the outer leg 32 of the U-shaped case portion are spaced from each other a distance slightly less than the distance between the inner most portion of the detent tang

58 and the outer surface of the first end 44 of the cross piece support member 28. Thus, when the end bar is inserted into the joining element, it would deflect/rotate the joining element.”

It is respectfully urged that Bottger only shows an arrangement for attaching a cross piece support member to a refrigerator housing, and at one end of the cross piece support member providing a hinge pin assembly which supports one end of each a refrigerator and a freezer compartment door (column 2, lines 36-44). No details are provided regarding the relationship between the border strip of the refrigerator relative to the side part as claimed by Appellant such that adjoining element is connected to the border strip in a manner to force a widening of an angle at which the border strip is connected to the sidewall. This is required by claim 1.

More specifically, Appellant has recognized that when bending metal sheets, it becomes difficult to maintain an angle of precisely 90° between the part that forms the sidewall of the refrigerator and the part that forms the border strip (Appellant's specification, page 1, lines 18-21). While it is possible to eliminate the problems of not having a precise 90° angle, this requires increasing process controls which involves additional production outlay. Thus, Appellant has recognized the problem which has been previously unrecognized and clearly not addressed in Bottger to provide a specific joining arrangement which subjects the border strip to a force having an effect of widening an angle at which the border strip is connected to the side wall as set forth in claim 1.

In this regard, it is respectfully urged that a critical step in analyzing the patentability of claims pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is whether the subject matter of the alleged §102(b) bar contains each element of the claimed invention. *Danacorp v. American Axle & Mfg., Inc.*, 279 F3rd, 1372, 61 U.S.P.Q. 2nd 1609 (Fed. Cir. 2002). It is respectfully urged that the disclosure of Bottger does not contain each element of the claimed invention and thus there is no §102(b) bar.

While the Examiner has asserted that when the end bar is inserted into the joining element as described in Bottger in a manner that it would deflect or rotate the joining element, it is respectfully urged that this is a mischaracterization of the reference. More specifically, it is noted that the deflecting tang once inserted into the U-shaped channel then fits into a corresponding slot so that the fact that the dimensions from the end of the deflecting tang to the other wall is slightly larger is irrelevant because once it is received into its corresponding slot, there is no deflection and, thus, Bottger fails to recognize and address the specific features of Appellant's claimed invention which addresses the failure to have border strips maintained at an angle of precisely 90° whereby adjoining element subject the border strip to a force having an effect of widening an angle at which the border strip is connected to the sidewall.

Other features claimed such as in claim 2 wherein the joining element forms a clamp clamping between at least two points of contact on a respective one of the front and rear side, with the two points of contact each being spaced apart by different distances from the sidewall of the body, are clearly not disclosed in Bottger in which the elements are held together by alignment of openings and fastener elements such as, for example, is shown in Figure 5.

Yet still further, the features of claim 4 wherein the point of contact on the rear side of the end bar is located closer to an adjacent one of the side walls than the point of contact on the front side of the end bar is also clearly not taught, and the Examiner has failed to clearly point out the specific features of claims 5-7, in particular, claim 11, where the joining element has been rotated elastically in relation to a position that the joining element assumes when not joined together with the end bar to cause the afore-described widening of the angle at which the border strip is connected to the sidewall. As to claim 14, it is also not anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for the reasons given with respect to claim 1.

Although it is respectfully urged that the teachings of Bottger do not disclose each element of the claimed invention and that there is no support for a

§102(b) rejection under the law, the teachings thereof can still be used to show that the claimed invention does not meet the unobvious condition of patentability, see generally *Danacorp* 279 Fed. 3rd at 1375-76, 61 U.S.P.Q. 2nd 1609. Thus, for the sake of completeness, an analysis of the requirements for a 35 U.S.C. §103 rejection, and arguments pointing out why such a rejection is not sustainable in light of the Bottger reference is presented herein.

A critical step in analyzing the patentability of claims pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103 is casting the mind back to the time of invention, to consider the thinking of one of ordinary skill in the art, guided only by the prior art references and the then-accepted wisdom in the field, *In re Dembiczak* 175 Fed. 3rd 994, 999, 50 U.S.P.Q. 1614, 1617 (Fed. Cir. 1999). Close adherence to this methodology is especially important in cases where the very ease with which the invention can be understood may prompt one to "to fall victim to the insidious effect of a hindsight syndrome wherein that which only the invention taught is used against its teacher." *W.L. Gore & Assocs. Inc. v. Garlock, Inc.*, 721 F.2d 1540, 1553, 220 USPQ 303, 313 (Fed. Cir. 1983). Every element of a claimed invention may often be found in the prior art. In addition, it is respectfully urged that the references cited by the Examiner fail to show every element of the claimed invention. However, identification in the prior art of each or most individual parts claimed is insufficient to defeat patentability of the whole claimed invention, *In re Rouffet*, 149 F.3d 1350, 1357, 47 USPQ2d 1453, 1457 (Fed. Cir. 1998).

One danger that can arise when modifying or combining prior art is the use of hindsight reconstruction, i.e., allowing the invention under review to act as a template for modifying a piece of prior art or for piecing together teachings contained in separate pieces of prior art. *Yamanouchi Pharm. v. Danbury Pharmacol*, 231 F3rd 1339, 1343-45, 56 U.S.P.Q. 2nd 1641 (Fed.Cir.2000). There must be clear-and-particular actual evidence of a motivation, teaching, or suggestion to modify or combine prior art. *Teleflex, Inc. v. Ficosa N. Am. Corp.*, 299 F.3rd 1313, 1334, 63 U.S.P.Q. 2nd 1374 (Fed. Cir. 2002). If there is no

evidence of a suggestion, motivation, or teaching that would lead the hypothetical person of ordinary skill to modify or combine prior art in the manner done by the inventor, then the decision maker, i.e., the Examiner, cannot hold that the claimed invention was obvious, *Winner Int'l. Royalty Corp. v. Wang*, 202 Fed 3rd 1340, 1349, 53 U.S.P.Q. 2nd 1580 (Fed. Cir.) cert. denied, 120 S.Ct 2679 (2000).

There are aspects of the invention which are grounded in the recognition that it is difficult to bend metal sheets to obtain an angle of precisely 90° between the parts that form the sidewalls and the part that forms the border strip in a refrigerator body. As a result, Appellant has provided a unique structure as recited in claims 1 and 14, wherein a crossbar is introduced into a joining element in a manner subjecting a border strip to a force having an effect of widening an angle at which the border strip is connected to a sidewall. There is nothing in Bottger which recognizes or even suggests that there is any deformation other than to perhaps the detent tang 58 as the elements are frictionally engaged with the detent tang eventually being received in slot 42. Thus, to state that "when the end bar is inserted into the joining element would deflect/rotate the joining element" is mere hypothetical speculation by the Examiner in a hindsight interpretation of the reference after knowledge of Appellant's claimed invention.

Yet still further, the features of claim 2 requiring at least two points of contact on the respective one of the rear sides of the end bar with the two points of contact spaced apart by different distances from a side wall of the body to result in the widening of the angle are clearly not taught by or obvious from Bottger.

As to the features of claims 4-7, it is respectfully urged that they, too, are not anticipated by or obvious from Bottger. As to claim 4, nothing in Bottger teaches or suggests the point of contact on the rear side of the end bar located closer to an adjacent one of the sidewalls in the point of contact on the front side. It is this arrangement that provides the desired deformation to result in the

widening of the angle. Nothing in Bottger teaches or suggests the features of claim 5 which include, *inter alia*, that the section of the end bar which engages extends obliquely through the groove of the U-profile between the two points of contact, while maintaining the two points of contact to result in the force which results in the widening. As to claim 6, it requires that at least one of the border strips has an edge directed away from the side wall and a joining element is connected integrally to the edge directed away from the side wall, with claim 7 requiring that the joining element is connected elastically to the border strip, none of which are taught by or obvious from Bottger.

Finally, as to claim 14, it is not anticipated by or obvious from Bottger for the reasons given with respect to claim 1.

The Examiner has also rejected claims 3, 8-10 and 12-13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable because they are obvious over Bottger in view of Whistler.

The Examiner states:

"Bottger discloses all the elements as discussed above except for the end bar having a joint-on buffer body forming at least one points of contact, the joining element is rigidly connected to either the border strip or the side wall, the border strip being covered with a colored sheet material, and the side wall being free of a color coding at least in a rear region.

Whistler, Jr. teaches the idea of providing a joint-on buffer body 42 forming at a point of contact, such as shown in Fig. 3, for the purpose of increase manufacturing tolerance of the dimensions of the elements. Therefore, it would have been obvious to modify the structure of Bottger by providing a joint-on buffer body forming at least one points of contact for the purpose of increased manufacturing tolerance of the dimensions of the elements, as taught by Whistler, Jr., since both teach alternate conventional

refrigerator housing, used for the same intended purpose, thereby providing structure as claimed.

In regard to the joining element is rigidly connected to either the border strip or the side wall, it would have been obvious and well within the level of one of skill in the art to rigidly connected the joining element to either the border strip or the sidewall in order to increase the overall load support of the housing, if so is desired. In regard to the border strip being covered with a colored sheet material, and the sidewall being free of a color coating at least in a rear region, it would have been obvious and well within the level of one of skill in the art to have the border strip being covered with a colored sheet material, and the sidewall being free of a color coating at least in a rear region in order to reduce the overall cost of the refrigerator.”

With respect to the features of claim 3 which requires a joint-on buffer body forming at least one of the points of contact, it is noted that the specification clearly describes that plastic buffer body as being capable of being flexibly deformed to a slight extent under the pressure acting on the second point of contact to make it easier to align the border strip in its position orthogonal to the side wall with increased tolerance of the dimensions of the end section and of the clamp and of the bending strength of the clamp (reference is had to the specification of the present application at page 13, lines 9-26). The buffer bodies of different thicknesses allow convenient adaptation if use is made, for producing the side parts, of batches of sheet metals with varying bending strengths. There is nothing in Whistler that recognizes or even suggests this arrangement for a buffer body, and the buffer body shown in and described in Whistler is a resilient foam plastic strip, preferably foamed form open cell polyethylene. Clearly, such a structure is incapable of providing the claimed function recited in claim 3,

wherein the joint-on buffer body is an integral part of the point of contact which causes the deflection which results in the widening of the angle as set forth in claim 1.

Claims 8-10 require various connections of the joining element to either the sidewall, or the border strip, features which are not shown or suggested by Whistler which merely provides the sidewall integrally forming a joining element having nothing to do with Appellant's claimed invention.


Finally, as to claims 12 and 13, while the Examiner has indicated that in regard to the border strip being covered with a color sheet material and the sidewall being free of a color coating at least in a rear region, that it would have been obvious and well within the level of one of skill in the art to have provided these features, the Examiner has failed to provide any evidence of the teaching in the prior art that these features are either anticipated by or obvious from the prior art. Again, it is only after a hindsight reconstruction, and without the ability to uncover relevant prior art, that the Examiner has advanced this rejection.

In light of the foregoing arguments, Appellant submits that the device recited in the finely rejected claims 1-14, is neither taught nor disclosed, nor rendered obvious by the combination of references applied by the Examiner.

In view of the foregoing discussion, it is respectfully requested that the Honorable Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences overrule the Final Rejection of claims 1-14 over the cited art, and hold that Appellant's claims be allowable over such art.

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November 29, 2005

APPENDIX

Claim 1. A housing for a refrigerator, comprising:

a body defining an interior and having:

at least one side part formed from a panel of flat material;

side walls; and

a front side with an opening open to said interior;

vertical border strips and horizontal end bars surrounding said opening, at least one of said border strips together with at least one of said side walls being a constituent part of said at least one side part;

said side part having a joining element for joining said side part together with at least one of said end bars; and

said at least one end bar being introduced into said joining element and subjecting said border strip to a force having an effect of widening an angle at which said border strip is connected to said side wall.

Claim 2. The housing according to claim 1, wherein:

said at least one end bar has a front side and a rear side; and

said joining element forms a clamp clamping in said at least one end bar between at least two points of contact on a respective one of said front and rear sides, said two points of contact each being spaced apart by different distances from a side wall of said body.

Claim 3. The housing according to claim 2, wherein said at least one end bar has a joint-on buffer body forming at least one of said points of contact.

Claim 4. The housing according to claim 2, wherein said point of contact on said rear side of said at least one end bar is located closer to an adjacent one of said side walls than said point of contact on said front side of said at least one end bar.

Claim 5. The housing according to claim 2, wherein:

said at least one end bar has a section with a thickness;

said clamp has two opposite legs defining a U-profile and a groove;

a distance between said two opposite legs is greater than said thickness of said section of said at least one end bar; and

said section engages in said clamp and extends obliquely through said groove of said U-profile between said two points of contact.

Claim 6. The housing according to claim 1, wherein:

at least one of said border strips has an edge directed away from said side wall; and

said joining element is connected integrally to said edge directed away from said side wall.

Claim 7. The housing according to claim 1, wherein said joining element is connected elastically to said border strip.

Claim 8. The body according to claim 1, wherein said joining element is connected rigidly to said border strip.

Claim 9. The body according to claim 1, wherein said joining element is connected rigidly to a side wall.

Claim 10. The body according to claim 1, wherein said joining element is connected rigidly to one of the group consisting of said border strip and a side wall of said border strip.

Claim 11. The housing according to claim 7, wherein said joining element is retained by said at least one end bar in a position in which said joining element has been rotated elastically in relation to a position that said joining element assumes when not joined together with said at least one end bar.

Claim 12. The housing according to claim 1, wherein said border strip is covered with a colored sheet material.

Claim 13. The housing according to claim 1, wherein said side wall is free of a color coating at least in a rear region thereof.

Claim 14. In a refrigerator body defining an interior and having a front side with an opening open to the interior, vertical border strips and horizontal end bars surrounding the opening, at least one of the border strips, together with a side wall being a constituent part of a side part formed from a panel of flat material, a connection configuration comprising:

a joining element at the side part for joining the side part together with the end bar, the end bar being introduced into said joining element and subjecting said border strip to a force having an effect of widening an angle at which the border strip is connected to the side wall.